

ERRATA.

Owing to the fact that the proofs of this Report were not submitted to the Medical Officer of Health before it was printed, several errors and omissions have been made, which are corrected by slips inserted opposite the mistakes.

ALNWICK
Rural District Council.



REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER

FOR THE YEAR ENDING
DECEMBER, 31st, 1898.



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Page 1. Title should read 'Alnwick Rural District Council
Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for Year
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ALNWICK
RURAL SANITARY AUTHORITY.

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REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER

FOR THE YEAR ENDING

DECEMBER 31st, 1898.

ALNWICK, JANUARY 17TH, 1899.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE RURAL
SANITARY AUTHORITY.

GENTLEMEN,

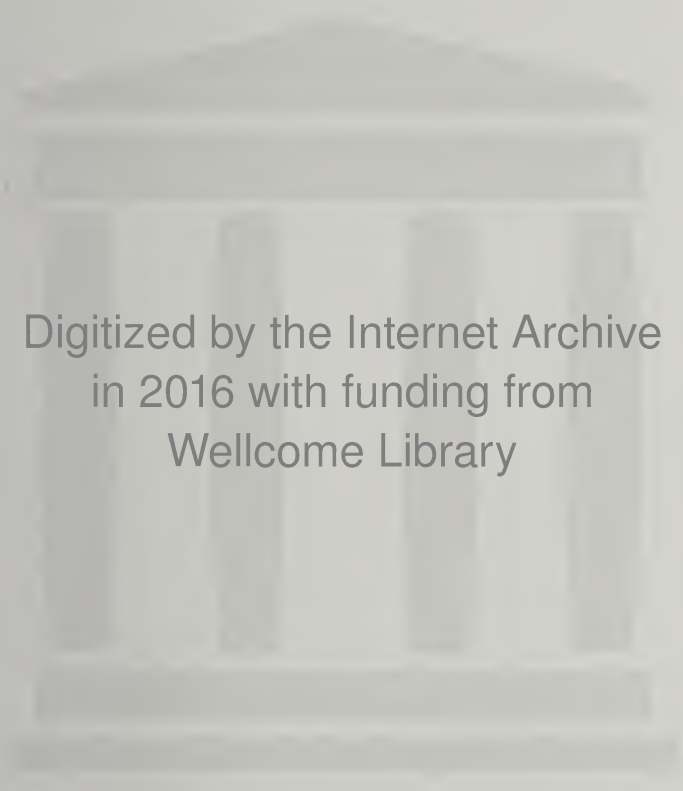
The early months of the year 1898 were characterised by a mildness quite unusual in our climate. The temperature seldom fell below freezing point, and it was a remarkable fact that on at least one day in the end of January, the average temperature was higher than that of the corresponding day in the following June. The advent of Spring was not marked by the genial conditions which might theoretically have been expected, and the summer months were well advanced before any degree of warmth was experienced. Fortunately, however, the latter part of summer and the autumn proved both a contrast to, and a compensation for what had gone before. This resulted in an excellent harvest, although, later on both crops and water supplies suffered from the late-continued sunshine and drought. The earlier part of winter has been marked by the same absence of extremes of cold as the two or three winters immediately preceding.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The year 1898 has been a fairly healthy one, and, although in some respects it does not reach the high water mark attained last year, yet in others the statistics I am about to lay before you are even more favourable than those for 1897. This does not, I regret to say, apply to the prevalence of infectious disease which, both in number of cases and in their gravity, greatly exceeded those reported in 1897.

Page 2. INCOME TAX

	Birth-rate per 1 000 per annum	Deaths per 1 000 per annum	Deaths per 1 000 per annum
1896.	330	27 10	181
1897.	325	26 69	167
1898.	300	24 65	192



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The birth rate is lower than last year, but as it is one half greater than the death-rate and as the infantile mortality is considerably reduced it must be regarded as satisfactory.

The death-rate for the year 1898 is considerably higher than that for 1896, yet, paradoxical as it may seem to say so, in some ways it is better. To understand this it must be remembered that a death-rate must not be considered entirely from the stand point of quantity, but also from that of quality, i.e., not entirely as to the number of deaths, but also as to the ages at which the deaths occur. In 1898 the infantile mortality shows a marked decrease and the senile mortality a great increase.

		Birth-rate per 1000		Death-rate per 1000
	Births	per annum	Deaths	per annum
1896	330	27.10	181	14.86

From the above it will be seen that the births in 1898 are respectively 25 and 30 under those in 1897 and 1896, while the deaths in 1898 are respectively 25 and 11 over those in 1897 and 1896.

Of the deaths 103 were of males and 89 of females, the disparity being caused by the deaths caused by accidents were especially drowning from which the male sex suffered almost exclusively. Here it is well to remember that the death-rate of the district has been adversely affected by the deaths which were caused by drowning in the shipwrecks which occurred on our coast during the autumn storms.

The following table shows the distribution of the deaths as regards the sub districts, and compares with the two preceding years:—

	Warkworth.	Embleton.	Alnwick.
1896	101	68	12
1897	96	61	10
1898	100	82	10

This shows a slightly increased number of deaths in the Warkworth sub-district, a considerable increase in the Embleton sub-district, while the number in the Alnwick sub-district stands still.

The deaths may also be analysed with regard to age at death, and for comparison I give the two preceding years:—

	1 year Under 1 year	5 years and under 5	15 years and under 15	25 years and under 25	65 years and over.
1896	43	14	11	11	40
1897	43	12	8	10	47
1898	36	8	8	13	54

The information conveyed by this table is fairly satisfactory, showing, as it does, a decreased infantile mortality and an increase of the number of deaths at a time when, in the course of nature, death is more to be expected. It may be here noted that in Warkworth

sub-district, out of 100 deaths 23 occurred under one year, and only 30 over 65 years; while in Embleton sub-district, out of 82 deaths only 12 were infants under one year, and 40 over 65 years. The large infantile death-rate in the Warkworth sub-district might surely be improved by an increased knowledge of the proper feeding of young children—at least such is the conclusion suggested.

The largest number of deaths for one month, viz. 30, occurred in March, and the least number, viz. 8, in September.

The return for the whole district, as before mentioned, was 192, giving a death-rate of 15·76 per thousand per annum. The death-rate in the Warkworth sub-district was 16·05, which exceeded the general death-rate; that for Embleton was 15·59, which was slightly below the general rate; that of Alnwick sub-district was 14·49, also below the general rate.

The births during the year 1898 were 300, of which 163 were males and 137 females. This gives a birth-rate of 24·65 for the whole district, distributed over the sub-districts as follows:—

Warkworth.		Embleton.		Alnwick.	
Birth		Birth		Birth	
Births.	Rate.	Births.	Rate.	Births.	Rate.
176	28·25	111	21·11	13	18·84

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

During the year 1898, 58 cases of infectious disease were notified in the district, as against 33 notified in 1887, and 147 notified in 1896. Of the cases notified, 28 were scarlet fever, 15 typhoid fever, 10 erysipelas, 4 diphtheria, and 1 puerperal fever. The distribution of the infectious diseases, as regards the sub-districts, will be seen from the following table:—

	Scarlet Fever.	Typhoid Fever.	Erysip- elas.	Diph- theria.	Puerperal Fever.	Tl.
Warkworth	3	14	4	0	0	= 21
Embleton	8	1	6	4	1	= 20
Alnwick	17	0	0	0	0	= 17
Totals	28	15	10	4	1	

From the above table it will be seen that scarlet fever has been most prevalent in Alnwick sub-district. This was not due to any insanitary condition, but to importation of infection from the Alnwick Urban District, where this disease has been epidemic. Of the 15 cases of typhoid fever notified during the year, 14 occurred in the Warkworth sub-district. These 14 cases occurred in five different localities, viz., at Lesbury, 9 cases; at Warkworth Station, 2 cases; at Acklington, 1 case; at Morwick Old Cottage, 1 case; at Low Buston, 1 case. The outbreak at Lesbury was of course much the most serious, the 9 cases resulting in 3 deaths. Fortunately the disease remained confined to one cottage at Lesbury Farm, which pointed

to an entirely local cause. This cottage has been vacated for some time and I have had several consultations with the officials of the Alnwick Castle Estate, who have shown a commendable anxiety that all sanitary precautions should be taken to prevent any recurrence of the disease. The drainage of this cottage, though not conspicuously defective, was no doubt in some way the cause of the outbreak, and it has been thoroughly gone into, and the drain properly ventilated and tested. The case at Acklington drew special attention to the dangerous nature of the water supply to that village, which is from a pump well with more than questionable surroundings, and constantly liable to contamination. Efforts are being made to get a more satisfactory supply, but it is to be regretted that some arrangement was not made when the Sturton Grange or Amble schemes were under way. The unfortunate recurrence of typhoid fever at Warkworth Station has been pointed out to be most probably due to the fact that the children persist in playing about the sewer mouth. This is a case where parental authority is more likely to do good than further sanitary precautions. The only case of typhoid fever in the Embleton sub-district occurred at Howick Pasture House, where a dangerously situated water supply was pointed out. The drainage was also pointed out.

Two outbreaks of diphtheria occurred during the year, both in the Embleton sub-district. The most serious was at Christon Bank Farm (3 cases with one death). This outbreak was found to be due to a very defective drainage system, which has been promptly remedied. The other case, at Stamford Crossing, was due to escape of sewer gas into a bedroom from a down spout, which condition has been remedied. During the year 1898 there have occurred in the district 7 deaths from infectious disease, which gives an infectious death rate of .57. The distribution of the deaths was as follows :—

Sub-district.	Scarlet Fever.	Typhoid Fever.	Diphtheria and Croup.	Puerperal Fever.
Warkworth	0	3	0	0
Embleton	1	0	1	1
Alnwick	1	0	0	0

WATER SUPPLIES.

Application has just been made to the Local Government Board for sanction to borrow the sum of £950 for works to increase the water supply at Alnmouth, on account of the springs which are situated over Shilbottle Colliery having almost disappeared last summer. It is proposed to collect the waters of four springs at Snableazes, which were yielding 18½ gallons per minute at the end of the recent exceptionally dry summer, which, calculated with the present greatly reduced supply to Alnmouth, will give the satisfactory quantity of 32½ gallons per head daily for the summer population. An open reservoir to hold a

quarter of a million gallons, or nearly a fortnight's supply, will also be constructed near the fountain head, and about $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles of 4-inch cast-iron coated pipes laid to join the existing main near Bilton.

Through the generosity of Major Widdrington, J.P., a new open service reservoir is about to be constructed for the township of Newton-on-the-Moor, to serve the double purpose of a break-pressure tank, and provide storage for about a fortnight's supply for the population of 215.

The following farms and cottages, which have frequently been reported upon by the Sanitary Inspector, are badly off for water:—Acklington High and Low Park, Birling North Field, Dean Moor, Glanton North Field, High Buston, Middle Cawledge Park, Shipley Lane, and West Cawledge Park.

SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE.

A sewer near Rose Cottage at Embleton has been taken up, re-laid, and re-jointed with cement, as the smoke test showed that it leaked into the cottage. The upper part of the Glanton main sewer in Whittingham Lane has been extended with sanitary pipes over the line of the stone built conduit which was close to Dovecote and Rose cottages, and emitted foul air near them. Opposite the Post Office in Glanton a nuisance has been abated by the provision of a trapped metal storm water pulley. Various schemes are in consideration, and different sewage disposal works have been visited by deputations of the Council, in connection with the difficult question of the Glanton sewer outlet which discharges the effluent out of a tank on the roadside, and flows into a neighbouring rural district. At Mouldshaugh a drain has been repaired, and a sink fixed for the cottages. At Proctor Steads the drains from the buildings have been diverted away from the roadside, thereby doing away with a nuisance at a roadside ditch. Sewage Scheme No. 6, for Togston Hall and cottages, has been completed, which consists of an underground settling or liquifying tank, and the extension of the sewer through the bridge over the highway. The new outlet is now about 55 yards below the lodge at the road, and 86 yards from Mr Arnett's Hall, and only the liquid out of the tank is now discharged at the outlet in the ditch which has received the sewage from Mr Dand's Hall since 1844, down the natural fall of the ground. At Togston Terrace an improvement has been effected by the Broomhill Coal Co., whereby surface water and sewage at North Broomhill in the Morpeth Union is now diverted away from the Alnwick district. Drainage has been provided for the cow-byres at Warkworth Castle. The old stone sewer near the Cross at Warkworth, which had again burst, has been cleaned out. The Local Government Board having given their sanction for £650 to be obtained, the Warkworth Main Sewage Scheme has since been commenced. A new contoured intercepting main sewer is at present being laid from "Boold's Whirl," in the tidal river, near Beal Bank, round the

village as far as the Brewery Lane Foot, and new sewers are in course of construction in Bridge Street and Castle Street. These works consist, briefly, of 9 yards of 15-inch cast-iron pipes with tidal flap, 250 yards of 15-inch, 640 yards of 12-inch, and 610 yards of 9-inch sanitary pipes, furnished with settling tanks, junction manholes, lampholes, flushing tanks, and ventilators. Drainage has been laid for the cottages at West Link Hall.

THE FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACTS, 1878-95.

The three fishyards at Craster have been inspected as to the sanitation, linewashing, and general cleanliness of the same. In two of them at the south side of the village the flooring has since been repaired with cement, and laid with a fall towards the outside.

PLANS PASSED.

Plans have been passed for a wash house at Glencairn, Argyle Street, Alnmouth; also for three houses in the same street, a new villa near the river, and for a bungalow to be erected on the triangular piece of waste ground near the Gas Works, Alnmouth, which last project has since been abandoned; also for a kitchen wing in a field connected with Croft House, Alnmouth.

For the Hare and Hounds Hotel, Embleton, plans have been passed for alterations and additions, including a bay window on the west side of the house on a piece of ground which the Eyre Trustees claim to be their own. Plans have also been sanctioned for four workmen's cottages and a stable for Embleton Quarry, also for extensive alterations and additions to the Sun Hotel, Warkworth.

The only townships which have bye-laws under urban powers are: Alnmouth, Embleton, Togston, and Warkworth.

THE DAIRIES, COW SHEDS, AND MILK SHOPS ORDER.

The Birling and Warkworth cow sheds have been visited by the Sanitary Inspector, who reported that "as a rule each had a large overflowing midden, the contents of some of which would have to be conveyed through dwelling houses on account of the absence of back roads." The byres at Acklington, Alnmouth, Glanton, and Felton have also been inspected. The air space was deficient in several, as lofts were formed above the cows' heads to store hay, thereby reducing what little air space the sheds contained, and the absence of ventilation in many was excused on the ground of keeping the cows warm, whilst in others there was practically no light, as darkness is supposed to keep the animals quiet. It would thus seem that the views of the Authority as expressed in the bye-laws, are totally at variance with the ideas of cow-keepers. The Inspector, however, whilst going round collecting particulars, gives verbal information to the

keepers of the cowsheds in regard to the requirements of the byelaw, and the need of some attention to sanitation generally.

In the matter of cubic space in cow sheds, it appears that a deputation from the Royal Agricultural Society waited upon the President of the Local Government Board about a year ago, to make representations to him as to the present anomalous state of things with regard to regulations made under the Order of 1885. After this interview took place the Local Government Board sent a letter to the Royal Agricultural Society, in which they stated that "several of the publishers of books and forms relating to local government have issued forms for the use of local authorities in preparing regulations under the order but these forms have not been issued with the approval of the Board, who have been in no way concerned in the matter. . . . It is true that the Board in dealing with some particular cases which have come before them, have expressed an opinion that not less than 800 cubic feet of air space per cow should be required. But they do not consider that this amount of air space should necessarily be provided in all circumstances, and as a matter of fact the amount required by different District Councils varies considerably. . . . It was suggested at the interview that the Board should themselves issue model forms for the use of District Councils in framing regulations under the Order of 1885. The Board will give careful consideration to this suggestion, but as they understood that the Royal Commission on Tuberculosis have had attention drawn to the question of air space in cow sheds, it seems to the Board to be desirable that any action of this kind should be deferred until the Report of the Commission has been issued."

ADDITIONAL NUISANCES ABATED.

The following is a brief summary of the other nuisances reported last year as having been abated:— In reference to the dampness of No 4, Lovaine Terrace, Alnmouth, the following adjoining owners have provided 5 new down spouts and 3 sinks, and have laid a drain into the pipe which existed below No. 4. The cleansing and improvement of the sewage ditch at Scot's Gap near Boulmer Moor, has been completed. At Eastfield, the farm house and cottages have been spouted. The paving at the back door of the farm house has been improved and drained to a sink, and the pantry and kitchen walls have been stoothed with lath and plaster. At Embleton Glebe Farm house the earth has been removed from the walls outside, and inside they have been cemented, and then stoothed, and otherwise greatly improved. At Felton a new rubbish shoot has been provided, and the old one, which was over the river bank at the foot of the main street, has been discontinued. At Friar's Well Buildings in Hulne Park, the 3 cottages have been provided with a complete new block of offices, consisting of privies, ash-pits, coal houses, piggeries. The Glanton rubbish

shoot has been raked back and levelled up, and as some of the refuse smelt in summer, a layer of earth has been put over it. The tenants of Glanton Tower Farm Cottages now keep their offices in a cleaner condition. At Learchild Moor House a sink and drain have been laid, and the well is now built round with masonry to prevent pollution. At Lemmington Bank Top a damp old cottage has been vacated and a midden removed. At Morwick the earth at the back of the millers' cottages has been removed, and the north wall plastered with cement, with the result that dampness has been materially reduced, but one of them still requires a privy. At Ratcheugh Crag a privy seat has been removed out of the scullery, and a rain tank, which was causing dampness, has been taken away, and the kitchen floor cemented. At Rock a group of six covered-in piggeries has been built for the cottages, at a satisfactory distance from them. The privies have been converted into ash closets, and other sanitary improvements made. A squatter family, who had taken up their abode in a tool house at Selby's Stead, have been ejected by the owner. At Silver Moor the damp flagging of the front kitchen and pantry has been taken up, and the floors cemented. A new kitchen sink has been fixed, and the waste pipe is now provided with an "S" trap and discharges into a sink outside. At Dunn's yard in Warkworth, a cottage, which was about 3 feet from an ashpit, has been vacated, and the closet for the other houses put in working order. The floor of an ashpit, which adjoined the entrance passage to the Public Hall in Warkworth, has been cemented, and the adjoining roofs spouted. In the same village an ashpit has been removed, and the drainage improved at a house near the top of Castle Street, where typhoid (enteric) fever occurred. Notices have been sent to 18 pig keepers at Warkworth to discontinue keeping swine within 60 feet of dwellings, as required under the byelaws.

I must express my obligation to the Inspector, Mr M. Temple Wilson, for the latter part of the report, dealing with water supplies, plans, and the abatement of nuisances, and also for his ready co-operation and assistance in any work in which we have been associated during the past year.

Finally, my sincere thanks are due to the Chairman and Members of the Council for their uniform courtesy and support, which have done much to render pleasant and satisfactory the duties of my office.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

SCOTT PURVES, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.